subscriber *i.e.* payment of final telephone bill, submission of original registration receipt/affidavit in regard to amount of security deposit made by the customer.

Bridge between India and Sri Lanka

*413. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government of Sri Lanka has proposed for a bridge across the Palk Straits and also for starting a ferry service between Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka;

(b) whether the State Government of Tamil Nadu has apprised the Centre about its views;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) what is the final decision of the Central Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) A letter has been written by Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu expressing reservations in this regard.

(d) The comments of the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu will be kept under consideration while examining the proposal.

Amount of food subsidy for PDS

*414. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) what is the amount spent annually on food subsidy for public distribution;

(b) whether it is also a fact that items like foodgrains, kerosene and sugar meant for public distribution are diverted to the open market in a large scale; and

(c) if so, the action taken by Government to check such diversion and ensure that the genuine beneficiaries get public distribution items?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) to (c) The amount spent as food subsidy for distribution of foodgrains under the Targeted Public Distribution System during 2002-2003 was about Rs. 9901.06 crores. No